



Lt. Gen. Howie Chandler, 11th Air Force commander, cuts the ribbon during the grand opening of the Atwood Military Lounge in August. The lounge is located on the first floor of the Anchorage International Airport.

ASYMCA: Serving those who serve America

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From Alaska to branches at more than 20 locations around the U.S., the Armed Services YMCA has a long history of serving those who serve America. ASYMCA is a non-profit organization founded in 1861 that provides educational, recreational, social and religious support to the military and their families.

At Elmendorf, ASYMCA services are everywhere and expanding, said Mr. Pete Mulcahy, ASYMCA executive director. "From offering the Women, Infants and Children program to free food and drinks to providing hundreds of free movie tickets each month, it's been a great year for us — and turnout has been super," he said. Elmendorf's ASYMCA also holds craft and cooking classes, delivers snacks during exercises and deployments, offers child watch services and free gifts to parents of newborns, has low/no-cost tickets and tours, and offers morale visits all over base.

In addition, Elmendorf's ASYMCA opened up a new courtesy lounge at the Anchorage International Airport in August. "The Atwood Military Lounge has scores of folks coming through. It's a place to take a

break between flights or wait for pick up. We have recliners for naps, a children's play area — we even have bathrooms and showers," he said. One of the most recent ASYMCA projects is to provide morale flights. "We're in the process of coordinating morale flights for the junior enlisted Coast Guardsmen who are stationed at Kodiak to get them to see things here," said Mr. Mulcahy. Another program just getting off the ground is the Storks Nest. It provides assistance to women with high-risk pregnancies who are sent here for medical treatment from remote regions. Mr. Mulcahy said he's also planning to open a food bank in mid-November. However, with all of this and more to come, there's one thing that hasn't changed: all of the smiles the ASYMCA offers come from volunteers and donations. "If you want a way to give back to the military and get that feel-good type of feeling, then volunteering for the ASYMCA is the way," he said. "Our support comes from volunteers, and 98 percent of our funding comes from donations." People interested in donating to the ASYMCA can give to the Combined Federal Campaign or go to www.asymca.ak.org. To volunteer anytime, call 552-9622.



Airman Tim Meyer, 3rd Equipment Maintenance Squadron, gets some pizza and chicken wings that were provided by the ASYMCA during the summer kickoff event at the Kodiak Community Center. ASYMCA hosted the event to meet some Airmen in the dorms and find out what classes they would like to see offered.



Master Sgt. Manny Pineiro, 90th Fighter Squadron and 3rd Operations Support Squadron first sergeant, hands out snacks to Master Sgt. Reynaldo Morales, 3rd Maintenance Group, during a recent exercise as part of ASYMCA's Operation Snack Attack program.



Above: Trinity Clark, 2, plays with one of the many toys in the Teddy Watch room at the Base Hospital. The program provides free child-care to families during their hospital appointments. On the cover: The Y-on-Rails program provides free railroad tickets to military members. In addition, eight scheduled train tours to destinations such as Talkeetna, Seward and Denali are offered annually.